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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 23-25, 2010

Summary: Coverage of a suspected U.S. drone crash in Miranshah on Sunday and reports that, across the North Waziristan Agency, the Taliban killed seven people suspected of spying for the U.S. made front page headlines on Monday morning. Newspapers highlighted reports Osama Bin Laden's claim of responsibility for the 12/25 failed attack on a U.S.-bound plane. Dailies also carried reports that "Al Qaeda-trained female bombers may attack in the West." Prime Minister Gilani's statement that a clash of institutions is "wishful thinking" also received front page coverage. Newspapers reported that Interior Minister Malik denied the existence of Blackwater in Pakistan, and reiterated his "commitment to resign if any such agency will be found working in the country." U.S. Defense Secretary Gates' recent visit continued to garner attention both in print and electronic media over the weekend. Headlines included: "U.S. (is) not seeking Pakistan nukes, bases control" (The News); "Al Qaeda (is) in no mood to quit region," (Dawn); "Gates strives to build trust with Pakistan military," (Daily Times). The controversy over the presence of the Blackwater generated from remarks attributed to Mr. Gates continued over the weekend. "Dawn" front-paged a report that the "U.S. Embassy tried to paper over Defense Secretary Gates' diplomatic faux pas of confirming Blackwater presence in Pakistan by putting the blame on the media." Media also reported State Department spokesman Crowley comments that "the U.S. continues to have a 'significant dialogue' with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan on how to stabilize the region and defeat and deter extremists." In an exclusive interview, "The News" quoted National Security Council spokesman Hammer's statement that the "U.S. is interested in providing material that helps out Pakistan to carry out its war against Al Qaeda." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Gates Faux Pas Opens The Door To Criticism - "Dawn"
(01/24)

"The U.S. Embassy on Saturday tried to paper over Defence Secretary Robert Gates's diplomatic faux pas of confirming Blackwater presence in Pakistan by putting the blame on the media, but it found few takers. Secretary Gates's impromptu comments in a television interview have renewed the focus on seething rage among Pakistanis about the involvement of private U.S. security companies, particularly Blackwater, in the country. The Embassy, in a statement on Secretary Gates's remarks, accused the television station and newspapers of inaccurate and dishonest reporting."

News Story: Distrust Of U.S. Dogged Gates During Pak Visit - "Dawn"
(01/24)

"U.S. Defense Secretary Roberts Gates has urged Pakistani leaders to

go after the extremists who threaten both Pakistan and the United States, says a senior White House official. U.S. National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer told a briefing at Washington's Foreign Press Centre on Friday afternoon that the Obama administration was looking forward to further deepening its partnership with Pakistan and Mr. Gates's visit was linked to those efforts."

News Story: War On Terror - "The News" (01/24)

"Michael Hammer, spokesman for the United States National Security Council (NSC), has said the U.S. was interested in providing material that helps Pakistan to carry out its war against al-Qaeda. In an exclusive interview with Geo News and The News/Jang, here on Friday afternoon, Michael Hammer was answering a question on provision of the drone technology to Pakistan. Hammer said U.S. Secretary Defense Robert Gates had already spoken on this issue the other day in Pakistan but it was very important to recognize that the U.S. was interested in supplying such material to Pakistan."

News Story: Drone Crashes In North Waziristan - "Dawn" (01/25)

"A U.S. drone crashed in Hamzoni area of North Waziristan on Sunday evening, but local tribesmen claimed to have shot down the pilotless aircraft.... Pakistan Army rejected similar claims after a drone crashed in South Waziristan in 2008, saying it was a technical problem."

News Story: Taliban Claim Shooting Down U.S. Drone In NWA - "The News" (01/25)

"Taliban in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on Sunday claimed to have shot down a U.S. drone in Hamzoni village near Miramshah and got hold of its wreckage."

News Story: Seven 'U.S. Spies' Killed In North Waziristan - "Dawn" (01/25)

"Taliban have shot dead seven people in North Waziristan after accusing them of being U.S. spies. Officials said in Miramshah on Sunday that five of the people killed were Afghans."

News Story: Usama Claims Attempt To Attack U.S. Plane - "Dawn" (01/25)

"Usama bin Laden claimed responsibility for the December 25 failed bombing of a U.S.-bound plane and promised more attacks on the United States, in an audio tape Al Jazeera said on Sunday was of the Al Qaeda leader. Usama, speaking days ahead of major international meetings on how to deal with militancy in Afghanistan and Yemen, said the attempt to blow up the plane as it neared Detroit was a continuation of Al Qaeda's policy since Sept 11, 2001 attacks."

News Story: Al Qaeda-Trained Female Bombers May Attack West - "Daily Times" (01/25)

"Women with 'non-Arab' appearances and travelling on Western passports might have been trained as suicide attackers to carry out terror attacks in the West, The Telegraph said in a report on Sunday."

News Story: Substantial Drone Technology Given To Pakistan: Malik - "The News" (01/25)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has again denied the existence of Blackwater in Pakistan, reiterating his commitment to resign if any such agency will be found working in the country. Talking to media persons outside the Governor's House on Sunday, the Interior Minister said neither any U.S. security agency was working in the country nor any such agency would be allowed to work in future, adding U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates had also endorsed the fact but his statement was distorted."

News Story: Gates' Visit Fails To Remove Irritants In U.S.-Pakistan Ties - "Dawn" (01/25)

"U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates' visit to Pakistan was an important friendly gesture but it did not lead to the removal of the

irritants that continue to mar relations between military establishments of the two allied nations, diplomatic sources told 'Dawn.' "

News Story: Petraeus Wants Partnership With Pakistan - "The News" (01/25)

"Pakistan is taking on militants effectively and the U.S. must show that it is going to be a steadfast partner of the key South Asian country that Washington abandoned in the past, Gen. David Petraeus, chief of the Central Command, said. 'Our task, which Secretary (Robert) Gates reaffirmed during his visit, has to be to show that we are going to be a steadfast partner; that we are not going to do to that country what we have done twice before, which is to provide a substantial amount of assistance - in some cases, create issues and challenges that they have to deal with in the future, like Mujahideen, and then leave precipitously and leave them with those problems,' he told a Washington think tank, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies."

News Story: 3,000 Bulletproof Jackets Held At Karachi Port - "The News," "Mashriq" (01/25)

"About 3,000 bulletproof jackets imported by U.S. Embassy have been stopped at the Karachi Port due to fear of slipping these things into wrong hands, sources said on Sunday. Well-placed sources told the NNI that these jackets had been lying in the port for a month due to non-clearance from security agencies. The sources said these jackets were held at the port after growing suspected activities of the U.S. nationals and import of bulletproof vehicles into the country."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: U.S. Not Seeking Control Of Pak Nukes, Bases: Gates - "The News" (01/23)

"U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates on Friday said the United States was seeking no military bases and had no desire to control Pakistan's nuclear weapons. 'Let me say definitively that the United States does not covet a single inch of the Pakistani soil. We seek no military bases here and we have no desire to control Pakistan's nuclear weapons,' Gates said while addressing at the National University of Defense (NUD) in Islamabad."

News Story: Gates Strives To Build Trust With Pakistan Military - "Daily Times" (01/23)

"U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates on Friday sought to build bridges with the next generation of Pakistan's military leaders and end a 'trust deficit' he said had hampered cooperation against militancy. Addressing military officials at the National Defense University, Islamabad, Gates said distrust between the allies had been compounded by an organized propaganda campaign orchestrated by their common enemy."

News Story: U.S. To Boost Civilian Presence In Pakistan, Afghanistan - "Daily Times" (01/23)

"The United States will maintain a civilian presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan for a long time, even after American combat troops leave the region, a State Department report said on Thursday. 'While our combat mission in Afghanistan is not open-ended, we will remain politically, diplomatically and economically engaged in Afghanistan and Pakistan for the long-term to protect our enduring interests in the region,' Reuters quoted the report as saying."

News Story: U.S., U.K. Seek To Integrate Taliban Into Mainstream - "Dawn" (01/23)

"The United States on Friday announced plans to reintegrate Taliban fighters into the political mainstream in Afghanistan, with the process envisaged to achieve success by July 2011. 'Our new strategy recognizes the political dimensions of the conflict and that only the Afghan people can secure their own country,' said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton while outlining the new strategy."

News Story: Malik Insists No Blackwater In Pakistan - "The News"

(01/24)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has, once again, ruled out the presence of Blackwater in Pakistan. He was talking to media persons after handing over scanners to the Federal Capital Police at a ceremony held at the Sports Complex on Saturday. The minister said: 'I state again with full responsibility and in the perspective of available record that there is no Blackwater in the country,' adding that a hype was being created by his political opponents. Malik challenged those claiming the presence of Blackwater to prove it through documents."

News Story: Pakistan Reaching Out To Afghan Taliban, Says FO - "Dawn" (01/24)

"Pakistan is reaching out to "all levels" of the Afghan Taliban in a bid to encourage reconciliation in its war-torn neighbor, the foreign ministry said on Saturday. U.S. President Barack Obama has said a political solution is needed to stabilize Afghanistan and emphasized that success would not be possible without the support of Pakistan."

News Story: Pentagon Wants South Asian Balance Of Power - "Daily Times" (01/24)

"U.S. military officials have said the Pentagon was being careful not to alter the balance of power in South Asia while providing F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, the LA Times said in a report on Saturday. 'Another squadron of F-16s means they [Pakistan] will lose the next war with India a little slower,'" a U.S. military official in Islamabad told the paper on condition of anonymity."

News Story: Gen. Kayani To Attend NATO Meeting - "Dawn" (01/24)

"Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani will leave for Brussels on Monday to attend the NATO's Chiefs of defence staff meeting, informed sources said."

News Story: Paramilitary Man Held For WFP Suicide Bombing - "Dawn" (01/24)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik said on Saturday that a paramilitary soldier had been arrested for his alleged involvement in the October 5 suicide attack on the UN food agency's office in Islamabad that killed five of its staffers. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan had claimed responsibility for targeting the World Food Program, saying the agency's work was not in 'the interest of Muslims.'"

News Story: CIA May Step Up Drone Attacks: NYT - "The Nation" (01/24)

"The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is likely to step up its drone strikes in Pakistan in reaction to Pakistan Army's stand not to open any new front against militants in the coming months, The New York Times reported Saturday."

News Story: Blackwater-Trained Officials Providing Security To PM? - "The News" (01/25)

"Security officials, mostly women, trained by the notorious U.S. security company Blackwater, have been providing security to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, putting the security of VIPs and the country at stake, informed sources disclosed on Sunday."

News Story: Drone Attacks To Figure In Talks With U.S. - "The News" (01/25)

"The crucial issue of U.S. drone attacks along the Pak-Afghan border area is expected to dominate the discussions between top Pak-U.S. officials during the forthcoming Islamabad visit of U.S. National Director of Intelligence (NDI) Dennis Blair. A top U.S. official confirmed on condition of anonymity here on Sunday that Dennis Blair is expected to arrive in Islamabad in the next few days."

News Story: Five U.S. Soldiers Killed In Afghanistan - "Dawn" (01/25)

"Five U.S. soldiers have been killed in bombings over the past 24 hours in Afghanistan, NATO's International Security Assistance Force

(ISAF) said on Sunday. Two of the troopers were killed in a home-made bomb explosion in the south, where the insurgency is most intense, the force said in a statement."

News Story: ANP Calls For Expulsion Of Foreign Militants - "Dawn" (01/25)"

"The Awami National Party said on Sunday that the country could get rid of extremism and terrorism by following the philosophy of non-violence.... They asked the Pakhtuns to get united against the 'outside forces' that were using Waziristan for their motives to spread terrorism and extremism."

News Story: Girls' School Blown Up - "Dawn" (01/25)

"The Taliban blew up a girls' school on Sunday in a town near Peshawar, police said."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: U.S. In Talks With Pakistan, India, Afghanistan On Regional Stability - "Daily Times" (01/24)

"The Obama administration is continuing 'significant' discussions with Pakistan, India and Afghanistan on ways to achieve regional stability, the U.S. State Department said on Saturday. Assistant Secretary of State Philip J. Crowley cited senior U.S. officials' continuing engagements with the regional governments towards the goal of cooperation and stability."

News Story: Gilani Trashes Talk Of Institutions' Clash - "Dawn" (01/25)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said on Sunday that people who were waiting for a clash between institutions and subsequent army intervention were mistaken and they would be disappointed. Addressing a public gathering in his hometown (Multan), Mr. Gilani emphatically stated that there would be no clash of institutions and the army which was rendering sacrifices and combating terrorists would protect the country."

News Story: Non-Implementation Of SC Verdict On NRO - "The News" (01/25)

"The Lawyers National Coordination Council on Sunday warned the government that if the Supreme Court verdict on the NRO was not implemented the legal fraternity would stage a protest against the government on January 28."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: U.S. Unveils Civilian Aid Strategy For Pakistan - "Dawn" (01/23)

"Helping Pakistan address immediate energy, water, and related economic crises was top on a list of priorities U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined on Thursday while unveiling a new strategy for enhancing America's engagement with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Helping Pakistan overcome these problems will 'deepen our partnership with the Pakistani people and decrease the appeal of extremists,' the secretary said."

News Story: Economic Shocks In Store For Pakistan - "The News" (10/25)

"Tense ties with Washington in the wake of visa issuance scrutiny placed by Islamabad for U.S. officials and screening of Pakistanis in the United States will not only lead to more mistrust between the two countries, it can also eclipse the future economic outlook for Pakistan. The U.S. is reluctant to give the already delayed \$1.4 billion under the head of the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) against the expenditures being incurred on the war against terrorism. This has really enlarged the stress manifold on the ongoing budgetary year."

News Story: WB To Continue Funding Punjab Govt. - "Dawn" (01/25)

"The World Bank (WB) Mission has agreed to continue providing

assistance to the Punjab government in health, education and agriculture sectors and Barrages Rehabilitation Project's Phase-II, covering Jinnah and Taunsa barrages. The mission headed by WB country director Yusupha Crookes called on Punjab Planning and Development Board chairman Sami Saeed in Lahore on Sunday for consultation on formulation of New Country Partnership Strategy for 2010-13."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Becky Gates Visits Lok Virsa - "The News" (01/23)

"U.S. Defense Secretary's wife Becky Gates paid a visit to the Lok Virsa here on Friday, which was coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad.... She greatly lauded Lok Virsa's efforts in documenting and preserving the indigenous folk culture of Pakistan through three-dimensional cultural displays. In her comments in the visitors' book, Mrs. Gates thanked Lok Virsa for a wonderful visit."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Gates's Visit, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/23)

"The defense 'suits' may not be as eye-catching as a rock-star secretary of state or uniformed military chiefs but make no mistake - in terms of substance it doesn't get much weightier than the high-powered delegation U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates brought to Islamabad on Thursday.... Second, Mr. Gates's visit was timed to discuss the modalities of Pak-U.S. cooperation in the run-up to the American 'surge' in Afghanistan.... The Americans have long been insisting that Pakistan take a 'holistic approach' to fighting militancy, i.e. the Pakistan Army should discard its 'prioritization approach', which, the Americans believe, disregards the threat posed by the Haqqani network in particular."

Editorial: Dialogue with Gates, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/23)

"Terrorism and all the complex issues around it topped the agenda for the visit to Islamabad by the U.S. Secretary of Defense and his flurry of meetings with the president, the prime minister, the COAS and other key officials. Robert Gates mixed praise for Pakistan's efforts against militancy with warnings of the need for still more Endeavour to defeat the militants. His carrot-and-stick strategy was obviously designed to maximize pressure on Pakistan.... Some of these stem from the unjust U.S. policies pursued in the region for decades. Simply issuing warnings or suggesting more emphatic military action will serve little purpose. In this context, Pakistan needs to come up with a blueprint for action and persuade its key allies that this needs to be followed if there is to be any headway against terrorism and an end to the internal threat it poses to the people of Pakistan."

Editorial: Total U.S. Insensitivity, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/23)

"U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates was given a clear cut message from the Pakistan military that it will not extend its operations into North Waziristan as South Waziristan will take at least a year to secure. Additionally the Pakistan Army has made it clear that it does not want to be over-stretched.... Unless the U.S. can understand the Pakistan-India dynamics from Islamabad's perspective, it can never create the trust it needs to further its contentious regional agenda."

Editorial: Pak-U.S. Gulf, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/24)

"The increasing anti-U.S. sentiment within Pakistan was palpable during U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates' visit to Pakistan. The tone was set by his statement in Delhi prior to visiting Pakistan that he could understand that India will feel pushed to the limit if there is another Mumbai-like attack by terror groups based in

Pakistan. Islamabad feels irked because it has continued to insist since 26/11 that 'non-state actors' carried out that attack and that Pakistan was in no way involved in it. In Pakistan's view, if the U.S. and India still doubt these assertions, it means we are being held hostage to the agenda of the terrorists, whose most coveted dream is pitching the two neighbors against each other once again."

Editorial: Twisting The Truth, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/25)

"As the State Department and U.S. Embassy at Islamabad desperately try to perform an impossible trick of retrieving the words of Defence Secretary Robert Gates, recorded by a private TV channel during his visit to Pakistan, admitting the presence of Blackwater and DynCorp here.... Nevertheless, this obvious admission has not embarrassed Minister Malik. He has, in fact, once again come out with denying the presence of this murderous outfit.... Once again, the free media did a national service of crucial significance.... the ill-famed outfit must be made to pack up and go before it could do any serious harm to our security interests."

Editorial: Blind to Pak Interests, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/25)

"The U.S. is clearly in no mood to accommodate Pakistan's interests or sensitivities as it goes about its already-failed military-centric 'war on terror' in this region. Having failed to push the Pakistan Army into a premature and disastrous operation in North Waziristan Agency (NWA), it has now decided to increase the already intolerable drone attacks against Pakistani territory and people.... For anyone in this country who still feels U.S. interests coincide with Pakistan's security interests, this latest move on drone attacks should be the final eye opener."

Editorial: Apprehensive Report of an American Newspaper, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/25)

"According to a recent report published in an American newspaper, Pakistan Army's refusal to expand its military operation in the tribal areas may incur the wrath of the CIA which will result in more drone attacks. This report shows that the U.S. is not convinced to respect the territorial integrity of Pakistan. In this scenario, we think that our ties with the Afghan people and the resistance forces are vital for Pakistan's own security and these relations need to further strengthened."

Editorial: The U.S. Will Have To Stop This Bloodshed Now, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/25)

"According to New York Times, America can double the number of drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal areas following Pakistan Army's announcement to not initiate a new military operation for one year.... The suicide attacks in Pakistan are happening in Pakistan in retaliation to the drone attacks. Ostensibly, the suicide attacks will increase if the drone attacks are to be increased.... America knows that its thirst for blood caused the unforgettable defeat in Vietnam and that moment is approaching in Afghanistan."

Editorial: "Blackwater In Pakistan: News Reports And Clarifications, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/25)

"Clarifications of statement by U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, in which he had admitted existence of Blackwater in Pakistan, still continue. The U.S. Embassy issued a clarification accusing a TV station and some newspapers of wrong and dishonest reporting.... According to a newspaper, U.S. Defense Department website report, contrary to the clarification by the Embassy, admitted that Secretary Gates had said, 'yes, they are working in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq as individual companies, for America is part of the war theater over there.' Prior to that Mr. Gates had clarified that, 'the Defense Department hasn't employed Blackwater services in Pakistan. We have nothing to do with Blackwater in Pakistan.' Some political observers have pointed out that there is no technical difference between Secretary Gates statement and then clarification."

He (Gates) did not categorically deny the existence of Blackwater and kept this statement limited to his department.... Clarifications by the American Embassy and the Defense Department confirm that 'Blackwater' DynCorp exists in Pakistan and this can't be denied.... The government of Pakistan should inform the nation about Blackwater and other such war companies. Defense Department's (Pakistani) comprehensive statement on the issue will be in order and it should be tabled in the National Assembly."

Editorial: Plain Talk, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/25)

"Prime Minister Gilani did well to tell Robert Gates, without mincing words, that Islamabad could offer no guarantee to India or U.S. regarding there being no repeat of a Mumbai-like attack. New Delhi might not like the position taken by Islamabad, but it is quite realistic.... The jingoistic statement implying that India might attack Pakistan in case of another Mumbai-like incident is indicative of short-sightedness.... One had expected that Robert Gates, who is supposed to have a more comprehensive view of things, would impress upon the Indian leadership the dangerous consequences of any flare-up in South Asia, which would be detrimental not only to the interests of Pakistan and India, but also the U.S. That he should agree to be the carrier of ultimatums of the sort is highly unfortunate."

Editorial: U.S. Efforts For Reconciliation With The Taliban, an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/25)

"After over 8 years of war in Afghanistan America has reached a stage where it is mulling over dialogue with Afghan rebels. Afghanistan's Karzai government is playing an important role in this respect.... Pakistan has always taken the stand that aggressive policy cannot succeed in Afghanistan. Now that America has changed its policy in view of the situation then it can only be described as positive."

Opinion: Gates Visit Created More Misunderstanding, an op-ed by Dr. Samiullah Koreshi in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/25)

"It is most unusual for a foreign minister on a visit to that country to speak on behalf of his host. The host has a tongue and he also could say what the occasion required. However, as if speaking on behalf of India- most Gates warned Pakistan that if an incident like Mumbai happened again India may react against Pakistan.... Was Gates statement made to underline a fact that despite Pakistan fighting American ignited war in this region on Pak-Afghan border, suffering a loss of around \$11 billion U.S. is more allied to India than cares for Pakistan part in the war on terrorism. This statement underlined India-U.S. strategic alliance even against Pakistan. How, need be explained: America's total identification with India over even Pakistan.... The routine contact persons like Holbrooke who come with a readymade plan to which Pakistan must comply, they come to sell the plans and thus convey orders; the other are high powered like Gates who create more misunderstandings than harmony and Hillary Clinton, who at least have a n attitude of persons of good will, and try to learn what is the public opinion. They have their own agenda but at least they create a good impression of friendly understanding or an attempt to understand what Pakistanis want and why, even if they have their own mandate. The less there are such visits as Gates the better."

Opinion: Drones And Doves!, an op-ed by Khalid Iqbal in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/25)

"Sending doves of neither drones nor visitors would solve the problem. The Americans have to take into account the ground realities as the time for a military surge is over. Likewise, arm-twisting maybe counterproductive for coaxing Pakistan into any arrangement that is perceived by the people of Pakistan as incompatible with its national interests. America needs to measure its brinkmanship in keeping with the gathering storm of the anti-American sentiments in Pakistan. The Pak-U.S. bilateral relations and associated multilateral interactions are beneficial to both. These must be preserved and sustained on a long-term basis. The onus surely rests on American statesmanship; it is time to make

a departure from Bush era policies and follow an objective and constructive approach."

Opinion: U.S. Should Revisit Its Policies, an op-ed by Ijaz Khan Yousufzai in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/25)

"The ongoing war has far reaching effects on the foreign forces. Physical losses and psychological illness of the troops has also been reported and most of the allied nations are hesitating from sending their troops to the southern provinces of Afghanistan because the recently staged operation (as code name operation sword) in Helmand has failed to show its stipulated results.... That foreign forces didn't plan to establish any proper economic plans till Oct 8, 2001 for rehabilitation of the destructed areas, this could be another factor behind failure of NATO troops.... In such a crucial economic conditions, U.S. should revisit to its policies and must follow the mediating way to face the problems."

Opinion: U.S. Nuclear Duplicity, an op-ed by Asif Ezdi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/25)

"Like Musharraf, Zardari has not taken up the question of Pakistan's access to civilian nuclear technology in his meetings with U.S. leaders. Nor has Nawaz Sharif raised it. Our 'sovereign' Parliament has not discussed it either.... If Gilani is serious, he should now write to the U.S. president to emphasize that if this partnership is to be meaningful, it must include access for Pakistan to civilian nuclear technology. The prime minister should also urge Obama to take the lead in getting Pakistan a waiver from NSG guidelines similar to that given to India. This issue should be made a priority item of the bilateral agenda, starting with the talks being hosted by Hillary Clinton in Washington next month. Gilani should similarly take it up with other leading NSG members."

Opinion: Territorial Integrity And Sovereignty, an op-ed by Prof. Majeed Khalid Ch. in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/26)

"The government seems to be finally realizing the negative blow-back of the U.S. policies and behavior towards Pakistan, ranging from the drone attacks to the screening of Pakistani citizens entering the U.S. and host of offensive policies in-between. That's why, the Government has come out strongly against the policies and stated in no uncertain terms that Pakistan was not interested in aid at the cost of its dignity and sovereignty, and in any case, it was trade not aid that was being sought.... As the Prime Minister and the Government have realized, that the U.S. cannot win in Afghanistan without Pakistan's support, it is time we demanded right price for this support rather than continuing to sell ourselves short. So with opportunity, credentials, performance against the war on terror and militancy, could it be expected to take up the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity seriously, with U.S.?"

Opinion: National Interests And Diplomacy, an op-ed by Shahid M. Amin in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/25)

"Pakistan's foreign policy, like that of other states, has sought to secure its national interests. Diplomacy has indeed acted as the first line of defence for Pakistan.... When the Soviet withdrawal was achieved in 1989, Pakistan and the U.S. moved away from each other. However, 9/11 again induced them to work in tandem in the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Pakistan's support was secured by Washington on the plank of 'either you are with us or against us.' Opposing the U.S. in such a scenario would have brought unacceptable consequences for Pakistan's national interests. However, unlike the Pakistani government, the Pakistani 'street' has been more influenced by emotionalism and has not supported this alliance. This dichotomy continues to create misgivings and mutual doubts even though both countries have a common objective - countering religious extremism which is destabilizing Pakistan. Pakistani foreign policy has also focused on promoting the country's economic welfare. Over the years, significant economic aid has been obtained by Pakistan from its foreign friends. The U.S. and the West have been the principal aid givers."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson